

Age of entrance for kindergarten and first grade

HB 1019 by Eckels (Shelley)

DIGEST:	<p>HB 1019 would have permitted a child who turned six years old after September 1, but before January 1, to be enrolled in the first grade for that school year. A child who turned five years old after September 1, but before January 1, could have been enrolled in kindergarten for that school year. Enrollment would have required a written request by the child's parent and approval of the school board.</p> <p>HB 1019 also would have exempted from compulsory school attendance children who had graduated high school or received a high school equivalency certificate, regardless of age, rather than only children who are at least 17 years old and have received an equivalency certificate.</p>
GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:	<p>"Although the original intent of the bill was to clean up the compulsory school attendance law as it relates to graduation, a floor amendment added the problematic language affecting entrance requirements. This amendment places an undue administrative and financial burden on local school districts. Districts will have to determine which children are ready to attend first grade and will then have to raise the additional funds to educate them. Given the escalating costs of providing a basic education for the current population of school age children in the state, it is not in the best interest of schools to create an unexpected increase in their student population by changing the age requirements."</p>
RESPONSE:	<p>Rep. Robert Eckels, the author of HB 1019, said: "The floor amendment made no real substantive change in the law. Districts today face the question of admitting students younger than six years old, and the language in the bill tracks current practice, providing no additional obligation to local districts. It is disappointing to see the clean-up provisions vetoed over a provision of the bill misunderstood by the governor's office."</p>
NOTES:	<p>HB 1019 was analyzed in Part Two of the April 26 <i>Daily Floor Report</i>.</p>